

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ~~SECRET~~ REPORT NO.

CD NO.

DATE DISTR. // Feb 1952

NO. OF PAGES 3

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

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SOURCE

1. In the Kurgan and Chelyabinsk regions the attitude of the population toward the West is rather friendly. The war veterans and later the peacetime Soviet soldiers coming from occupation forces stationed in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania and Poland, had brought along and spread the truth about the western life, which is considered much better, and the living standard of western peoples, which is uncomparably higher than the Soviet. This difference in living standards is common knowledge throughout the USSR. Told and repeated are stories about comfortable houses and apartments in which the western peoples are living; of how a family usually occupies an apartment consisting of three to four nicely furnished rooms, while the Soviet family is happy to be assigned one single room of "zhilploshchad" ("living space"). Admired are western clothes and the fact that one person possesses several suits or dresses, an almost inconceivable situation for the average Soviet Citizen, who normally has one, or at best, two suits of clothes - the working one and the "holiday" suit. Characteristic in this connection is the Soviet line of propaganda, aiming to ridicule the westerners and the abundance of clothes in western countries, the US in particular. This propaganda is typified in the following scornful remark, very popular among Soviet propagandists and radio commentators: "Is it not foolish to possess several hats having but one head to put them on?". Yet, even if some Soviet citizens sincerely believe that this is foolish, it is at the same time attractive. Stores in the west full of free merchandise and consumer goods in enormous quantities, available to all classes of population, are admired by Soviets. Western workers are envied for short working hours and unlimited freedom outside of this period, not taken by the "voluntary" overtime work performed for the "Fatherland" or "Comrade Stalin", or spent in attendance of obligatory political meetings, lectures, etc.

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2. It is interesting to note that all these stories are told more or less openly as mere statements, with none of the discussion which would be only too natural in the comparison of western and Soviet life. Neither is there, on such occasions, any criticism of the Soviet living conditions, nor is blame put on the government. It is impossible to determine whether this lack of criticism is caused by fear of the regime and the ever-present MGB; or is a result of the passive attitude of population used to the hardships of the Soviet life, and of the universal almost fatalistic non-resistance to all they have been subjected for many years. Both are probably contributing factors.
3. To understand this unusual attitude it should be borne in mind that through the years of privation, insecurity, fight for the daily bread to maintain the bare existence, and all the hardships of the Soviet life, to which the population had been exposed, the Soviet people have acquired a rather peculiar mentality. For almost everybody in the USSR life is very hard. There is no time or use for meditation and mental analysis. With a fatalistic shrug of the shoulders - "What can we do about it?" - people simply dismiss with no comment everything not directly connected with their daily life, which absorbs not only their entire time, but their mental and physical strength, as well. That is why stories of the western standard of living and western life in general are passed around with no comment or discussion. It would be wrong, though, to assume that these stories are passed unnoted. Dismissed or not dismissed, they contribute to the existing and ever-increasing postwar dissatisfaction of the Soviet people with their lot, and under favorable conditions would produce definite results.
4. The friendly attitude of the Soviet people toward the US had its beginning in World War II, when enormous quantities of US military equipment, locomotives, trucks and food were sent to the USSR. Although the Soviet Government tried to keep the population unaware of this help and even to minimize and to ridicule it, not only millions and millions of servicemen, but Soviet civilians also, benefited from this generous help. This will not be forgotten by the people. The US equipment is highly praised and admired in the Soviet Union. It goes so far that the adjective "Amerikanskiy" is becoming a general term among the population to describe any foreign equipment or machinery of high quality. Frequently even the dismantled German machinery brought to the USSR is mistaken and adured as "Amerikanskiy".
5. The friendliness towards Americans is especially noticeable among the population of territories occupied during the war by Germans. Starving and homeless people of these devastated areas were taken care of by UNRRA, which in the broad masses of Soviet population was considered as an American welfare organization. The unselfish and generous help rendered after the war by the US to these distressed peoples of Ukraine and White Russia soon became common knowledge throughout the USSR, and contributed very much to the friendly and sympathetic attitude of the population toward US.
6. It is not uncommon to hear from Soviet veterans that "Studebakers" won the battle of Berlin. It is well-known among servicemen that toward the end of World War II the GAZ and ZIS trucks (auto manufacturing plants: Gor'kovskiy Avto Zavod and Zavod Imeni Stalina) used as prime-movers for Soviet artillery were discarded and replaced mainly by powerful Studebaker trucks. Soviet veterans say that GAZ and ZIS trucks, compared with Studebakers, are just "junk". In this connection, it is of interest to mention that at the present time the Soviet occupation army in Germany has on its wartime T/E as artillery prime-movers almost exclusively American Studebakers. They are kept in garages in perfect mechanical condition, cleaned, greased and oiled, ready for any emergency, and are not used even for training purposes.

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7. It is a general belief in the Soviet Union that the country is heading for an all-out war with the US. Korea is but the start. Soviet propaganda efforts to create again a national spirit in the country and to unite the people for defense of "Fatherland" are seriously hampered by the hopeless position in which disabled Soviet Army war veterans have found themselves since the war. The government has not provided them with sufficient disability pensions to maintain even a bare existence, and it is not at all uncommon to see benedaled Soviet veterans, officers and soldiers, begging for a piece of bread and few kopeyek in town markets and other public places. This certainly does not contribute to the creation of a national war spirit and enthusiasm for a new war.
8. Another important resistance which Soviet war propaganda is encountering is caused by the poor experience the population had in the past war. During World War II, trying desperately to inspire and to unite the people to resist the German invasion, the Soviet Government got away from any enforcement of Communist doctrines and has switched overnight its vast and powerful propaganda apparatus to the strictly Russian-national field. Russian national heroes, Aleksandr Nevskiy, Minin and Pozharskiy, Suvorov, Kutuzov, were taken out of "moth-balls" and glorified. The war was officially proclaimed the "Second Fatherland War" and put on the same glorious national level as the Russian Fatherland War of 1812. In numerous statements made during the World War II the Soviet Government promised the population far-reaching economic reforms, higher standard of living, freedom and liberties yet unknown to the Soviet people. However, the Soviet Government has shamelessly broken all its promises and subjected the population to the same ruthless exploitation and police state administration as before the war. Famine which swept over the vast Soviet areas in 1946-47 made living conditions almost unbearable. All this has created among the population a widespread feeling that the government has misused and deceived them.
9. There is, however, a noticeable difference in the attitude toward the West of the older and younger Soviet generations. The older group, and especially the war veterans who had been exposed to the hardships of war and experienced the deceptive Soviet propaganda, are mostly disillusioned and dissatisfied. They fought and won the war, but their lot has not become any better; it may even be worse. Unless the government can succeed in presenting the coming war to the population as a national one (which after the World War II deception is an extremely difficult task), it can be reasonably assumed that the Soviet veterans would not willingly fight and die for Stalin's regime, but would rather surrender in masses at the first opportunity. Hope that the Soviet Union would be defeated in another war is not at all unusual among the older people. But the younger generation, starting with the age classes born 1927, is much more reliable in this respect. Not shaken by war experiences in their beliefs in Communist ideology and subjected day in day out to Soviet propaganda and indoctrination, the younger generation is inclined to believe the government's propaganda that the US is preparing for an aggressive war against the Soviet Union in order to enslave its peoples.
10. And yet, nothing would be more wrong than to expect the dissatisfied and disillusioned population of the USSR to start an armed uprising against the regime in case of a new war. State control in every field of the Soviet life, including the military, is so tight, and every movement is so thoroughly checked and observed by the everpresent MVD and MGB, that anything like a spontaneous revolution in the Soviet Union is completely out of the question. Many major victories on the battlefield would be necessary to disorganize the Soviet system and shake the structure of the Communist police state, thus creating conditions ripe for an internal revolution.

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